

2. So to aid them in their witness, the writer has already given the witness of the saints of earlier days and has served them with the example of the Lord himself. It is looking unto Him that we are to run, laying aside the sin, etc. But even in that run there may be many trials so we must be prepared to see these as "training cycles" under the direction of our Father. If our earthly fathers thought enough of us to train us, and we took it well, the heavenly Father also will show such concern.

3. The application of Christ to our own lot is not overly strong. The joy was more than the contradiction...the work more than the pain...the reward more than the effort. So in that light whatever affliction is granted us in the testimony, it should produce that end.

B. Discussion

1. Adversity...what is it? Hard to define with precision, we may say that adversity is what turns against us...rubs us the wrong way...with real force. It is especially marked when it goes contrary to what might otherwise be expected. But it is not just minor griefs or annoyances..it is trouble that impedes the progress.

2. Adversity...how does it express itself? It may come in the form of persecution. This can be more or less overt, more or less physical. But it is always a form of despite for the testimony. It is not simple human inconvenience. Rather it is oppression for fidelity to the person of Christ. Conceivable too, it might show itself in rejection when, if not persecuted, the individual Christian is simply not received. One might also see it in the way in which things go wrong although he may not be able to perceive the source of their wrong going. (Most Christians blame the satanic forces for all wrong going...but a lot of it should be blamed on their own carelessness.) And it may be seen even in the unwillingness of brethren to give